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Governor Hill. There was some partisan denunciation of Mr. Hill for his "new departure," but no answer was offered to his main proposition that contested-election cases should go before the courts for adjudication and settlement. The subject is now before the New York Legislature in the form of a concurrent resolution proposing an amendment to the constitution whereby "the Legislature may provide by law for judicial proceedings in the courts of the State to determine questions relating to contested seats in either house, and that judgment in such a proceeding shall be conclusive as to the election and qualifications of the person in whose favor it is rendered."

Under the present method it is almost inevitable that contested cases are decided more from partisan considerations than strictly according to the evidence. It is true that one of the contests in the present House of Representatives was decided in favor of the Democrat who held the seat that was contested; but a single case does not prove that the Committee on Elections was a non-partisan body. Where one party has only a narrow majority, it is only human nature for it to attempt to increase that majority if a reasonable pretext for doing so can be found in contested elections. Public confidence in the fairness and impartiality of our courts has never been shaken, and no one can doubt that in their hands contested-election cases would be decided with substantial justice, and with as little reference as possible to partisan concerns.

However, my main point is the necessity of putting an end to the heavy bills of expenses which are piling themselves up in connection with cases of this character. If the total has reached \$100,000 now, who knows that it may not soon reach \$200,000? "*If it costs too much, we ought to devise some plan to lessen the cost.*" It does cost too much, and the machinery for lessening the cost is ready to hand. The subject is one that demands early and the most serious consideration from Congress. Speaker Reed will be in the minority after March 4. He can scarcely do his country a greater service than by agitating this question and bringing about, if possible, a reform in the present costly, cumbrous, unsatisfactory, and partisan method of dealing with election contests in the House of Representatives.

JULIAN PROCTOR.

IS OUR NATION DEFENCELESS?

IF THE people of the United States were to be divided according to their ideas concerning public defence, they might be generally grouped into four classes, thus: (1) those who never think about it; (2) those who dismiss it with a notion that the country never need have another war; (3) those who think that the United States can fight the world at a day's notice; (4) those who see how utterly unprepared we are. Three of these classes are living in a fool's paradise, in spite of the repeated warnings of soldiers, who, while they are in no sense alarmists, are still alarmed at the apathy and hostility with which their prudent counsels have been treated. A glimmer of the truth regarding the navy seems growing to a light, and, although the Pacific coast is entirely neglected, a few inadequate appropriations have been made for the defence of a small part of the Atlantic seaboard, and provision has been made for a few modern guns.

But the land forces, the men who should always be in training, the army and militia, are practically neglected. The army is wretchedly small; the

militia has had no general law enacted for it since 1792, and is dependent upon such legislation as the several States may see fit to enact.

Peace has prevailed for more than twenty-five years. The veterans of the last war are passing away. Many of their sons have gone beyond the age when a man is most fit for soldiering. The generation which would be called upon to fight if war came now is entirely untrained. The country does not possess a modern book of tactics. Yet it is not unusual to hear men who ought to know better declare that "the United States, if pushed to extremity, would spring to arms and create an army almost in a day, as it did in 1861." This is nonsense, the result of bravado and ignorance. Neither this nation nor any other ever created on the spur of the moment an army or navy worthy of the name. At the close of the War of the Rebellion the armies of both the North and South were as good for their time as the world ever saw, and, in some respects, looking to the material of which they were chiefly composed, they were superior to any armies that had ever existed; but they had become so only after long training and hard fighting. At first they were little better than armed mobs, each as bad as its adversary. They grew together, fighting each other stubbornly, yet often indecisively, because, as the training of one side advanced, so did that of the other, until at the close of the conflict they were really formidable. They deserved to the full the measure of praise awarded to them by one of England's most distinguished military writers, Colonel Charles Chesney, who, after Europe had witnessed the Franco-German War, penned these words:

"There is a disposition to regard the American generals and the troops they led as altogether inferior to regular soldiers. This prejudice was born out of the blunders and want of coherence exhibited by undisciplined volunteers at the outset—faults amply atoned for by the stubborn courage displayed on both sides throughout the rest of the struggle; while, if a man's claims to be regarded as a veteran are to be measured by the amount of actual fighting he has gone through, the most seasoned soldiers of Europe are but as conscripts compared with the survivors of that conflict."

If a text were wanted for a sermon on the vanity of buncombe, it might well be taken in Colonel Chesney's phrase, "the blunders and want of coherence exhibited by undisciplined volunteers at the outset." His words denote the danger that will inevitably threaten the United States if a war should come under anything like the present condition of affairs.

Our army has but a nominal strength of 25,000 men. It is scattered over a vast territory in small detachments, and were it to be concentrated,—a task requiring time,—its parts would be for a still longer time strange to each other and consequently incoherent. It would then be better, of course, than hastily-organized volunteers, but it would be for a period inferior to troops that had been accustomed to manœuvre in large bodies.

The militia in the several States varies greatly. Some States, so far as the infantry arm is concerned, have what may fairly be called compact little armies, but these are the exception rather than the rule; and even in the States thus prepared the instruction of their forces is quite elementary, outside of a fair knowledge of camp duty under the most favorable peace conditions, where the men live almost as well as though quartered in first-class hotels.

In case of war, the President may call out the militia for a limited time—too limited to make the call an effective element of active operations. Hence the law of the land provides for the organization of volunteers, who may be called into service for a term of three years if necessary, and it is upon these volunteers that the chief dependence of the country must rest. They cannot

be called out until the last moment, and they must be trained before they can be of any use. The problem, therefore, which ought to attract attention is, how to provide the means for making these volunteers into effective troops in the shortest possible time.

As the academy at West Point is the school for officers of the army, so the army and militia are the schools for officers of the volunteers. Thus the army and militia have each a two-fold function—*i. e.*, each is a force, and each is a school for the elements of additional force. Each should be maintained with both these functions constantly in view.

The army not only is too small, but, under the present system of recruiting it in the large cities, it is composed of a lower order of men than it should be obliged to accept. If it could be enlarged to twice its present size, say to 50,000 men, quartered in and recruited from the States of the Union upon some such basis as the apportionment of congressional representation, so that the regiments would become identified to a certain extent with the locality of their stations, there can be no doubt that the character of its members would be raised in proportion to its increase in strength.

One reason why the people take so little interest in the army is because they rarely see any portion of it worthy of notice; but whole regiments, or at least respectable detachments, with men locally recruited, near their homes, contented, and therefore less liable to desertion than they are now, would not only attract attention so as to arouse their pride as soldiers, but would excite an interest politically in their very existence, while as examples to the militia they would exert a most beneficial influence.

Such a plan would help the militia as much as it would help the army. Each needs the help of the other. The army needs the political interest of the militia to make Congress enact a law to increase the army and locate it among the States, while the militia needs the help of the army in harmonizing the present military statutes of the States into a national militia law. Any attempt at making such a law by conventions of militia officers, or through the political representatives of the States, will result as heretofore—in nothing; but after the army has been quartered among the States, upon the plan herein indicated, for a period long enough for careful observation and comparison,—say three years,—a convention of army officers could easily prepare a scheme for a proper statute.

Thus the interests of army and militia are identical; and this community of interest ought to result in the training of a citizen soldier better prepared than his predecessor of 1861 to organize the regiments of volunteers upon whom, in case war comes, the country must rely.

General Schofield, now commanding the army, modestly suggested in his report for 1890 that it be increased to 30,000 men. Such a force is too small for the present needs of the country, notwithstanding the buncombe of newspapers about the dread of standing armies and the power of short-term militia men in war, as instanced in the following extract from an editorial in one of the leading daily papers of the country, commenting upon General Schofield's report:

"While it is, perhaps, to be expected that the improvements in army regulations and discipline brought about in the past year may improve the general average of enlisted men and give the country a more efficient standing army than it has had hitherto, it is not to be hoped that the service will be brought to such a strength as will completely satisfy General Schofield. The whole feeling of the citizens and voters of the United States is far more strongly against a large standing army than most army officers are apt to realize, and it must be confessed that there is much in the history of the past to strengthen and confirm that feeling.

"At all events, the United States already has in its national guard a body of men of whom it may well feel proud, and who will in part, if not wholly, take the place of a standing army in any time of emergency. The national guards of this and many other States are organizations on which the country can depend for its defence from invasion. At each annual encampment the high general tone and splendid character of the troops become more and more marked, until they are, in some respects, ahead of the army itself. Certainly they are not one whit behind it in courage or loyalty."

It is difficult for any one acquainted with the defenceless condition of the country to read patiently vaporings like this, and it is discouraging to think that any part of the people, however small, may be thereby led to consider a wretchedly small force of 30,000 men too large a standing army for this great nation, or to harbor a delusion that our militia can successfully withstand trained regular soldiers; but the editorial just quoted pales before another, published a few weeks earlier in a newspaper whose circulation is one of the largest in the Union. It is so remarkable that it is worth quoting entire. It is headed "A Waste of Money," and is as follows:

"While it is interesting to learn that the government has taken the first steps toward spending \$7,500,000 upon the defences of Boston Harbor, and has also outlined plans for similar and perhaps larger expenditures at other seaports, it may be pertinent to ask if these outlays are in any way in accordance either with common-sense or with the professed peaceful policy of our government. If the citizens of Boston were given by the national government \$7,500,000 to be devoted to works of public utility and amusement, the benefit that could thus be permanently secured would be incalculably great. This sum might be invested so as to bring in an annual income of from \$250,000 to \$300,000 a year, and if this income were spent in free excursions to school-children and others, great entertainments in our public squares, or in giving premiums for the erection and maintenance of model tenement-houses, or a part of it in carrying on certain scientific investigations for the benefit of the people, an immense amount of service could be done. As it is, this money is to be spent from time to time in the erection of what are now to a large degree, and will in the future be still more, needless works of military defence. We are now a people of nearly 65,000,000, and at the close of the present century will have more than 80,000,000 of inhabitants. Our wealth for all practical purposes is unlimited. There is no nation that can invade us, and, thanks to the international policy that we have pursued from the first, we have no reason to quarrel with foreign countries. For the last quarter of a century our harbors have been defenceless, with the chances of attack far greater than they will be in the future. More than this, if a foreign attack was to be expected, the teachings of modern science in the use of high explosives and electricity would, in all probability, long before the time of danger came, enable us to provide ourselves with defences that no enemy would dare to encounter. The expenditure, therefore, except as a means of relieving the treasury of money, and in this way of spending the surplus, is almost entirely uncalled for. It is a pity that where so much good money is going to waste some really good deserving public use cannot be made of it."

It is high time for delusions and misrepresentations and arrant nonsense like these articles to cease. The people are not all fools, nor can the bulk of them be in sympathy with utterances so manifestly against reason and experience. War does not wait for the planting of foundries, yards, factories, and arsenals, and the making of ships, guns, armor, explosives, and scientific appliances, nor for the training of armies. Hostilities once declared, the unprepared weakling must go to the wall. Judicious appropriations for the public defence are the premiums for the life insurance of a nation. War ransoms are no part of true political economy. Let us give "millions for defence, but not one cent for tribute."

THOMAS F. EDMANDS.